

How can school communities help to prepare young people to be responsible citizens in line with fundamental values such as peace and tolerance of diversity?

How can a Catholic school (or any school community in that matter) take part in the life of an individual? Prepare pupils for the “cruel reality” which is well known to our parents, who face it every day. From working hard for a living, paying bills to raising children. How can a school really contribute to make us (students) responsible adults?

First of all, fundamental values have to be restored, in some way. I think that the school subject Religious Education is one of the best ways to get somebody acquainted with diversity. It's essential that people learn more about various cultures (including religions, races, languages, etc.). You see, the most important and valuable thing today is information. If you think how many riots, even wars could be hindered if only people knew more about each other's beliefs. For example, terrorists that we know today are usually Muslims (attention: not all of them). The religion itself (Islam) is nowadays considered to be one of the worse things in this planet. The problem is that people tend to “throw everything in the same basket”, as the Slovenian proverb tells us. If one person is bad, then the whole group can't be anything else but bad. And in this case, the information is the key for developing fundamental values. In order to get pupils acquainted with different religions debate clubs could be organized. Schools could invite a representative of each religion and in that way pupils would get “first hand” information- they could ask about whatever is troubling them (maybe about certain details of the religion, culture), and learn more about the historical and cultural background, etc. Pupils would at least get the chance to create their own opinion (which is often “threatened” by the media) and maybe even try to understand the meaning of certain religious actions. Schools could also organize excursions, so that the students would get to know other cultures (we have that in our school already).

In conclusion, the most helpful thing is knowledge- pupils have to be stimulated, encouraged to learn more about the world (not only from what is written in schoolbooks). We should be taught to look around us in order to accept the wonders of diversity.

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